THE SERA LECTURE 2004
EDUCATION REFORM AS SOCIAL BARBERISM:
ECONOMISM AND THE END OF AUTHENTICITY[1]

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> 'all these concepts have been ill-defined, so that one hardly knows what one
> is talking about' (Foucault Live, 1996: 447)

INTRODUCTION

My concern here is with the consequences of recent educational reforms for what
we commonly and imprecisely refer to as teacher professionalism. However, it
is enormously difficult to speak sensibly about professionalism at the current
point in time, given what Stronach and colleagues, quite rightly, refer to as the
'methodological reduction, rhetorical inflation and universalist excess' (2002: 110)
within which the construct is embedded. I will 'own up' straight away to trading on
and perpetuating parts of the 'folk epistemology of professionalism' (Pels, 1999: 102)
and I want to have my conceptual cake and eat it. I shall try to treat professionalism
as 'what it is', a form of situated practice, and make some claims for a normative
version of a sort professionalism which is neither 'folk' nor 'post'. I also want to
take professionalism as emblematic of something else, of certain general changes
in the nature of, or possibilities of our lives within high modernism.

I also want to acknowledge that I write here from personal experience, from
within rather than simply *about* the practices of professionalism. This is one more
contribution to the cacophony of voices which speak to, for and about teachers which
are competing to be heard with more or less success.

I want to argue here that professionalism is coming to its end, is being dislodged
from its 'precarious, glittering existence' – that there is a profound shift underway in
several of the 'many independent forces which condition the formation of teachers'
professional identities in practice' (Dillabough 1999: 390). A shift so profound that
within the 'post-welfare' regime of social service, professionalism as an ethical-
cultural practice, appears to have no place, no future.[2] Mine then is a narrative of
despair, of loss and pain and betrayal, though it should not necessarily be read as
a story of tarnished glory – more like a fairy story about the struggle between the
lesser of two, or more, evils.

I take it that professionalism, as a pre-reform or un-reformed category, rests, in
part at least — because it also has important structural and organisational features
— on a particular relationship between the practitioner and their work, a relationship
of commitment that is located within communal and internal dialogues.[3] That is,
within moral reflection – in the attempt to organise practice by making the 'right'
decision, in a moral landscape that allows space for moral uncertainty, and the
deployment of 'moral knowledge', knowledge which is as Lambek (2000: 316)
puts it both 'practical' and 'indefinite'. Professionalism in these terms rests upon
ambiguity and pluralism. As Bauman (1991: 51) puts it: 'Only pluralism returns
moral responsibility for action to its natural bearer: the acting individual'. That is,
professionalism is meaningful only within the framework of a substantive rationality,
and that attempts to re-define professionalism within a framework dominated by
technical rationality renders the term meaningless. With all the modernist dangers it
forebodes I will refer to the pre-reform professional – as an authentic professional.
Where authenticity rests on the value of reflection and the ever present possibility
of indecision[4] — not that this was necessarily always realised in practice — but
once the possibilities of moral reflection and dialogue and indecision are eradicated

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then the possibilities of professionalism are in effect eradicated[5]. I want to go on to argue that this eradication is achieved, brought out, by the combined effects of the technologies of performativity and managerialism, which together perfectly and terrifyingly represent the modernist quest for order, transparency and classification – 'a consciousness prompted and moved by the premonition of inadequacy' (Bauman 1991: 9). I shall locate this eradication, and its consequences, illustrated through some snippets of data, within persons.

One of the problems now involved in talking about professionalism is that in much of the current usage of the term, particularly in political and managerial texts, the just about comprehensible signifier and the vaguely recognisable signified have been rent asunder. What is variously called 'new professionalism' (McNess, Broadfoot and Osborn, 2003: 248), 're -professionalism' 'post-professionalism' or even 'post-modern professionalism' are not professionalism at all (in the terms of my normativity). Indeed in their terms what I might call professionalism can even become 'unprofessional' (Smyth, *et al.*, 2000: 85). Thus, if we are to be able to talk about professionalism, we must be sure we know what we mean by it – of course part of the re-signification of professionalism in managerial texts is based on the hope that we will not notice that what is meant and practised is different from what was meant and practised before. The key points of difference, or two of them at least, are first, that these re-workings, these 'post-professionalisms' are ultimately reducible to exogenously generated, rule-following, and second, that they render professionalism into a form of performance, that what counts as professional practice rests upon meeting fixed, externally imposed judgements. The criteria of quality or good practice here are closed and complete – as against 'the need for moral reasoning and proper uncertainty' (Lambek, 2000) as definitive characteristics of professional practice. To put in another way, 'post-professionalism' stands over and against 'trust' and contingency. Effectiveness only exists when it is measured and demonstrated and local circumstances only exist as an unacceptable 'excuse' for failure to deliver or failure to conform. In the text by Stronach and colleagues (2002) data are deployed and at one point they write about the teachers and nurses whom they quote as talking about '**their** professionalism as something they had lost' (p. 117). It seems to me that the 'their' in this phrase, 'their professionalism', gets to the nub of many issues here. Post-professionalism is somebody else's professionalism, it is not the professionalism of the practitioner. The practitioner is left or held responsible for their performance, but not for the judgement as to whether that performance is 'right' or 'appropriate', but rather whether it meets audit criteria. They are 'mere spectators' (Stronach, 2002: 115) or 'disembedded subjects' (Weir, 1997) who are required to 'extract themselves from their social experience' (Dillabough, 1999: 378) and strive for some kind of 'disengaged instrumentalism' (Taylor, 1989). Within all this teachers have lost the possibility of claims to respect except in terms of performance. They have been subjects of a discourse of derision and can no longer 'speak for themselves' in the public debate about[6] their practice. The sense of loss referred to above is, according to Taylor (1991: 1) a significant feature of the malaise of modernity: 'people feel that some important decline has occurred'. A sense which again he relates to the 'primacy of instrumental reason' (p. 6) and a concomitant 'fading of moral horizons (p. 10). Now you may want to convince me that in post-McCrone Scotland my characterisation of 'new professionalism' is mis-guided, too English – but in anticipation of that I would want to say several things. First, my interpretation of reform here does not focus on single-policies, like McCrone, but rather the effects of policy ensembles, like McCrone, and curriculum guidelines, and testing, and classroom monitoring, for example. As MacDonald (2004:1543) does in her ethnographic study of a Scottish primary school. Second, I want to disconnect policy technologies from policy texts and focus on the effects of technologies in their own right. Third, while not wanting to dispense with the

significance of national variations my emphasis is on what Menter and his colleagues call 'a global performative cultural formation (p. 211)[7].

PERFORMATIVITY AND MANAGERIALISM

Having tried to be clear about the use of the term professionalism perhaps I should now do the same thing for my other key terms – performativity and managerialism. Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change. The performances of individual subjects or organisations serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. They stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation within a field of judgement, making 'silences audible' (Bauman, 1991: 5). The issue of who controls the field of judgement is crucial and one key aspect of the global educational reform movement are situated struggles over and shifts in the control of the field of judgement and its values. Performativity is what Lyotard (1984: *xxiv*) calls 'the terrors — soft and hard — of performance and efficiency – that is, 'be operational (that is, commensurable) or disappear'. This arises in good part from 'the natural inclination of modern practice – intolerance' (Bauman, 1991: 8). For Lyotard performativity encapsulates the functionality and instrumentality of modernity and the commodification and exteriorisation of knowledge. It is achieved through the construction and publication of information, indicators and other institutional performances and promotional materials as mechanisms to animate, judge and compare professionals in terms of outcomes; the drive to name, differentiate and classify – as through for example the "excellence standard" (TES, 09.11.04: 8). Performativity, or what Lyotard also calls 'context control', is intimately intertwined with the seductive possibilities of a particular kind of economic (rather than moral) 'autonomy', what Lyotard calls 'coercive autonomy', for both institutions and in some cases individuals — like principals — or should I say leaders; the 'autonomous' subjectivity of such productive individuals has become a central economic resource in the reformed, entrepreneurial public sector.

Alongside and in relation to this, managerialism has been the key mechanism in/for the political reform and cultural re-engineering of the public sector in northern countries over the past 20 years. Management works to instil performativity in the worker's soul. It has been the primary means 'through which the structure and culture of public services are recast… [and]… in doing so it seeks to introduce new orientations, remodels existing relations of power and affects how and where social policy choices are made' (Clarke, Cochrane and McLaughlin, 1994: 4). It plays a key role of the wearing-away of professional-ethical regimes that have been dominant in schools and bringing about their replacement by entrepreneurial – competitive regimes. This involves 'processes of institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation" (Lowndes, 1997: 61) rather than a 'once and for all' change, it is an ongoing attrition, made up of incremental larger and smaller changes which are many and disparate. Over time the workplace is 're-enchanted', using an instrumental emotionalism and revived pre-modern 'charismatic' leadership (Hartley, 1999).

Performativity and management then are two of the primary policy technologies of education reform. Policy technologies involve the calculated deployment of techniques and artefacts to organise human forces and capabilities into functioning networks of power. Various disparate elements are inter-related within these technologies; involving architectural forms, relations of hierarchy, procedures of motivation and mechanisms of reformation or therapy.

When employed together these technologies offer a politically attractive and 'effective' alternative to the state-centred, public welfare tradition of educational provision. They are set over and against the older technologies of professionalism and bureaucracy. They combine to produce what the OECD (1995) calls 'a devolved

environment' which 'requires a shift by central management bodies toward setting the overall framework rather than micromanaging… and changes in attitudes and behaviour on both sides' (p. 74). The changing roles of the central management agencies in this new environment rests, as the OECD put it, on 'monitoring systems' and the 'production of information' (p. 75). Management and performativity are then the ugly sisters of reform – they dispense the twin disciplines of evidence and imperative in the effort towards order and clarity. These are restless and future-oriented technologies. Inherent in their dynamism is a continual de-valuing of the present – 'which makes it ugly, abhorrent and unendurable' (Bauman, 1991: 11). They are defined by states of performance and perfection which can never be reached, by the illusion, which always recedes, of an end to change. They are bitter, unforgiving and tireless, and impossible to satisfy.

Significantly then the policy technologies of public sector reform are not simply vehicles for the technical and structural change of organisations but are also mechanisms for reforming public sector practitioners, like teachers, for changing what it means to be a teacher, social worker or nurse. That is, 'the formation and reformation of the capacities and attributes of the [teacher's] self' (Dean, 1995: 567). Reform does not just change what we do. It also seeks to change who we are, who it is possible for us to become – our 'social identity' (Bernstein, 1996: 73). That is, education reform is 'about the powers that have come to bear upon the subjective existence of people and their relations one with another' (Rose, 1989: *ix*). Thus, my particular focus here is not primarily upon structures and practices, but upon the re-forming of relationships and subjectivities, and the forms of new or re-invented discipline to which this gives rise. Within the policy technologies of reform there are embedded and provided new identities, new forms of interaction and new values.

Throughout the installation of these technologies into public service organisations the use of new language to describe roles and relationships is important, the reformed educational organisations are now 'peopled' by human resources which need to be managed; learning is re-rendered as a 'cost-effective policy outcome'; achievement is a set of 'productivity targets' etc. To be relevant, up-to-date, we need to talk about ourselves and others, think about our actions and relationships in new ways. This is what Morley (2003) calls 'ventriloquism'. These languages speak us, make us up in a lexicon of order and clarity. New roles and subjectivities are produced as teachers and lecturers are re-worked as producers/providers, educational entrepreneurs, and managers and are subject to regular appraisal and review and performance comparisons. New forms of discipline are put in place by competition, efficiency and productivity. And new ethical systems are introduced based upon institutional self-interest, pragmatics and performative worth. In each case the technologies provide new modes of description for what we do and produce new constraints upon our possibilities for action. We are not determined but specifically enabled by them. This re-making can be enhancing and empowering for some but this has to be set over and against the potential for 'inauthenticity'; see below. What is happening here is that human complexity is reduced to the most simple possible form – a category or a number in a table.

However, within all of this, while we may be constantly tempted to speak about 'the professional', and indeed 'the manager' and 'the leader' – these are neither collectively nor individually unitary, nor coherent and fixed identities. Despite the ambitions of reform, the nature of commitment, purpose and role-definition varies and always has varied between individuals and is situationally dependent. Different settings offer different possibilities and limits to professionalism. And indeed, also, within the definition of professionalism with which I am working, authenticity depicts the professional as always 'becoming', as 'dynamic and ambivalent' (Stronach, *et al.*, 2002: 117), as a moral agent who is 'always responsive to the situation' and

'perpetually learning' (Dawson, 1994: 153), as managing dilemmas and not simply a promiscuous, 'empty' and pragmatic self.

Nonetheless, in emphasising the situational qualities of professionalism I am not intending to suggest that the new 'performative' institutions are 'of a piece' – as Lowndes (1997: 63) suggests the task of management is to build 'a relatively stable configuration of different institutional elements'. Configurations will differ between institutions even of the same type and their institutional elements may be experienced and responded to differently by practitioners. There still may be places to hide, places where the 'right' decision can still be made within 'The complex and diverse purposes of public service organisations' (p. 62). We well might find some 'principled principals' (Gold, Evans, Earley, Haplin and Collarbone, 2003) seeking to resist the imperatives of 'bastard leadership' — as Wright (2001) calls it — 'the capture of the leadership discourse by the "managerialist" project' (Wright 2003: 1). Or am I falling into the mire of hopefulness?

What I am suggesting here is that the combination of managerial and performative reforms bites deep into the practice of teaching and into the teacher's soul — into the 'classroom life' and world of the teacher imagination (Egan, 1994) — specific and diverse aspects of conduct are reworked and the locus of control over the selection of pedagogies and curricula is shifted. Classroom practice is increasingly 'made up' of responses to changing external demands. Teachers are *thought of* and characterised in new ways; increasingly they are *thought of* as pedagogic technicians.

In essence performativity is a struggle over visibility. Information is collected continuously, recorded and published – often in the form of League Tables. Performance is also monitored eventfully by peer reviews, site visits and inspections. Within all this, 'violence is done to the concreteness of' individual humanity and 'particularity' (De Lissovoy and McLaren, 2003: 133) and 'complex human and social processes are more and more flattened into crude representations that will conform to the logic of commodity production' (p. 133). We become 'dividuals' (Deleuze, 1992) – a market statistic, an item in a data bank, part of a sample. It is the generalised effect of visibility and judgement entering into the ways that we think about our practice that does the work of performativity. Not infrequently the requirements of such systems bring into being unhelpful or indeed damaging practices, which nonetheless satisfy performance requirements. Within the matrix of judgement, comparisons and performance-related incentives individuals and organisations will do whatever is necessary to excel or to survive. In other words, these policy technologies have the 'capacity to re-shape in their own image the organisations they monitor' (Shore and Wright, 1999: 570). Constant doubts about which judgements may be in play at any point mean that any and all comparisons and requirements to perform have to be attended to. Selection and prioritisation becomes impossible and work and its pressures intensify. And always just beyond the cold rationality of performativity is the public moral outrage, constructed on our behalf within the media, that is aimed at vilifying the 'worst school', and 'unsatisfactory teachers'. This is the 'furious tenacity of the belief in personal responsibility' (De Lissovoy and McLaren, 2003: 134), which is deeply inscribed in modern consciousness, and revealed in what Adorno (1995) calls 'idealism as rage'.

Performativity then bites deeply into our sense of self and self worth. It calls up an emotional status dimension, despite the appearance of rationality and objectivity – it trades heavily upon guilt and responsibility. Here is Bronwyn, a year 4 teacher quoted in account of *Restructuring Schools, Reconstructing Teachers*, talking about a forthcoming Ofsted inspection.

> I will cope with it, I will take it on board, I will do all the things I'm meant to do and I'll scrape and bow and I will back the headteacher to the hilt and I will back the school to the hilt. I won't let anybody down. But secretly

> inside myself I'm very, very angry that we're being made to go through this but I'm not quite sure at whom I'm being angry. It is the Government? Is it the LEA? It must be the Government.

We also see the peculiar elusiveness of performativity. These judgements take on a life of their own. We are responsible for and to *them*. They are disembodied requirements which entangle and confuse us. MacDonald (2004: 429) describes a similar response by the teachers in her study and their sense of 'changes such as the post-McCrone Agreement as something which is "happening" to them'. Also here, again as Macdonald describes (pp. 425–6), there is a form compliance on the one hand and a resulting 'dissonance between ideology and practice on the other' (p. 426). And the anger, the dismay, the confusion and the dissonance is turned inward and must be struggled with internally. As a consequence 'any resistance becomes that of the individual seeking personal integrity' – but such internalised resistance can be immensely stressful and damaging. (See also Osborne's (1996) case studies of two primary teachers). Bronwyn takes on both the responsibility of doing what seems necessary to support her headteacher and her colleagues, while dealing with her anger 'secretly inside'. Much of the work that performativity does on us is done by us as we seek to be responsible to others.

THE VIOLENCE OF REFORM

Let me quote two more English primary school teachers, first Elizabeth and then Cloe. Elizabeth is talking about her school's new maths policy and Cloe about teaching for SATs.

> It's cloning us again. I've written the maths policy the same way as everybody else has done, but its not couched in the way that I speak or think or I believe.

> It is completely alien to my way of teaching – testing and teaching, teaching to test. However, my focus is on that really, and I don't give a monkey's uncle about anything else. If that's what they want…

Here then is what Casey (1995) calls 'defensive selves', confused and alienated subjectivities[8]. Subjectivities, and a 'new professionalism', which work from the '*outside in*' (Dawson, 1994) 'where virtue is consequent upon following prior principles regarding belief and conduct' (Stronach, *et al.,* 2003: 113). What Bernstein (2000: 1942) calls 'mechanisms of introjection' whereby 'the identity finds its core in its place in an organisation of knowledge and practice' are here being threatened by or replaced by 'mechanisms of *projection*', that is an 'identity is a reflection of external contingencies' (Bernstein, 2000: 1942) – Elizabeth's 'cloning'. And in response to all this, as a way of coping, Cloe is giving up on authenticity, on belief and commitment, she is going to focus of doing what is necessary, what is required, rather than what she feels is right.

For individual *pre-reform* or un-reformed teachers, struggling with authenticity, a kind of *values schizophrenia* is experienced when commitment and experience within practice have to be sacrificed for impression and performance. Here there is a potential 'splitting' between the teachers own judgements about 'good practice' and students 'needs' on the one hand, and the rigours of performance on the other. There is a 'disjunction between policy and preferred practice' (NcNess, Broadfoot and Osborn, 2003: 255). These teachers 'experience a "bifurcated consciousness" (Smith, 1987) or "segmented self" (Miller 1983) or struggle with "outlaw emotions" (Jaggar, 1989) as they try to live up to and manage 'the contradictions of belief and expectation' (Acker and Feuerverger 1997 quoted in Dillabough 1999: 382) which are embedded in the subject positions of authenticity and reform. In Bauman's (1991: 197) terms this is 'the privatisation of ambivalence' which, 'cast on individual

shoulders calls for a bone structure few individuals can boast' – stress, illness and burn out are often the result. To the extent to which they hold onto their 'outlaw emotions', teachers like those quoted above and below risk being 'constructed outside this dominant view of the professional, despite the demands placed upon them to conform to it' (Dillabough, 1999: 382). Authenticity and performativity clash and grate - particularly perhaps, as McNess, Broadfoot and Osborn (2003: 255–6) found, for teachers in England. Frank states:

> I love the contact with the children and when I say paperwork, I'm not talking about marking or preparation. It is the interference, not from the head, but from the Government and outside bodies… So much of the pleasure is going from it … We are so busy assessing children that we're forgetting to teach them.

Frank is having real problems in thinking of himself as the kind of teacher who simply produces performances – of his own and by his children. His commitments to and pleasures from teaching, his reasons for becoming and being a teacher seem to have no place in the reformed classroom. He sees himself becoming 'a teacher devoid of meaningful connections to those whom she is expected to educate' (Dillabough 1999: 379). What Smyth, Dow, *et al.* (2000: 140) call the 'primacy of caring relations in work with pupils and colleagues', or what McNess, Broadfoot and Osborn (2003: 246) describe as 'a sociocultural model which recognised and included the emotional and social aspects necessary for a more learner-centred approach' have no place in the productive world of performativity. The effective is compromising the affective (McNess, Broadfoot and Osborn, 2003). Frank's story is a not uncommon one in the UK as the regime of performativity drives increasing numbers of teachers out of the education system. It would appear that current concerns relating to the low morale of teachers, and in some contexts the problem of under-recruitment into teaching, have their basis, in some part at least, in teachers' sense of having to 'give-up' their authentic commitments to and beliefs about teaching in the face of reform (McNess, Broadfoot and Osborn, 2003: 255). Teachers like Frank and Cloe and Elizabeth are no longer encouraged to have a personal rationale for practice, an account of themselves in terms of a relationship to the meaningfulness of what they do, but rather they are required to produce measurable and 'improving' outputs and performances, what is important is *what works* in achieving these ends. This leads to what Acker and Feuerverger (1997) call 'doing good and feeling bad', which may also be a version of what Moore, Edwards, Halpin and George (2002: 554) call 'contingent pragmatism' – 'a sense, that is, of consciously being in a state of largely enforced *adjustment*'.

There are three versions of (in)authentic practice here; in relation to oneself, one's sense of what is right; in relations with one's students, when a commitment to learning is replaced by the goals of performance; and in relations with colleagues, when struggle and debate — what De Lissovoy and McLaren (2003: 134) in their version of authenticity refer to as ' a true dialectical relationship… between individual and collective moments of being' — is replaced by compliance and silence. This structural and individual schizophrenia of values and purposes, and the potential for inauthenticity and meaninglessness is increasingly an everyday experience for us all. The activities of the new technical intelligentsia, of management, drive performativity into the day to day practices of teachers and into the social relations between teachers. They make management, ubiquitous, invisible, inescapable - part of and embedded in everything we do. Increasingly, we choose and judge our actions and they are judged by others on the basis of their contribution to organisational performance, rendered in terms of measurable outputs. Beliefs are no longer important - it is output that counts. Beliefs are part of an older, increasingly displaced discourse. Put another way, teachers like Frank and Elizabeth are seeking to hold onto knowledges

about themselves and about their practice which diverge from prevailing categories. These are now seen, in Foucault's terms, as 'knowledges inadequate to their task… naive knowledges… disqualified knowledges' (Foucault, 1980: 81-82). A new kind of teacher and new kinds of knowledges are 'called up' by educational reform – a teacher who can maximise performance, who can set aside irrelevant principles, or out-moded social commitments, for whom excellence and improvement are the driving force of their practice. Under a regime of performativity 'identity depends on the facility for projecting discursive organisation/practices themselves driven by external contingencies' (Bernstein, 2000: 1942). These new post-professional identities are very powerful but also very fragile and there are moments, as indicated above, when they become unsustainable. This kind of 'post-professionalism' is commonly articulated in terms of increased collegiality, but a collegiality realised by individuation and indeed competition, and fixed in relation to the visions of leadership and corporate goals – a contrived collegiality (Hargreaves, 1991).

Embedded in almost all of the examples I have quoted are a set of dualisms or tensions – and as such we might want to be rightly suspicious of them (MacLure, 2003: 9–10). They are tensions between belief and representation. On the one hand, teachers are concerned that what they do will not be represented by or valued within the metrics of accountability and, on the other, that these metrics, if taken seriously, will distort or 'hollow out' their practice. Alongside this is a further tension, indicated already, between metric performances and authentic and purposeful relationships[9]. This goes to the heart of what it means to teach.

Crucially, as indicated already, these new forms of institutional and system regulation have both a social and interpersonal dimension. They penetrate our mundane day to day interactions in such a way that the interplay of their collegial and disciplinary aspects become very murky indeed. In this there is a real possibility that authentic social relations are replaced by performative relations wherein persons are valued for their productivity alone. Their value as a person is eradicated. An example of what De Lissovoy and McLaren call 'the violence of erasure' (2003: 133). The same can occur in teacher-student relations, when student performances are viewed primarily in terms of their impact upon institutional standing – for example within what Gillborn and Youdell (2001: 74) call the 'A–C economy' which, they argue, 'captures something of the de-personalised nature of the processes within which teachers and pupils feel caught'. However, these are not simply things done to us, as in previous regimes of power. These are things that we do to ourselves and to others. What we see here is a particular set of 'practices through which we act upon ourselves and one another in order to make us particular kinds of being' (Rose, 1992: 161). Mahony, Menter, *et al.* (2004) take up these issues and the emotional impacts of reform on teachers in their account of performance-related pay and they quote this teacher:

> When I started teaching it was a very nice profession… you actually got to know the children you were teaching. But now, it's almost as if, because we're under this huge amount of stress and strain that we have now, we've become immune to it and that is being pushed down into the pupils. We're producing children who are very stressed… I don't think it's healthy. (Teacher 1/f, Seamill Secondary)

TWO DISCOURSES – AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF ESTABLISHING A DIFFERENT RELATION TO ONESELF

A complex of overlapping, agonistic and antagonistic discourses swarm and seethe around the would-be or erstwhile professional in this scenario of reform[10]. But these can be reduced, with some degree of simplification, to two. One dominant and one currently very much subordinate (see for example, Fullan and Hargreaves,

1992 and Grimmett and Neufeld, 1994). The former encompasses the 'reformed or post-professional', or in Laughlin's (1991) terms the 'colonised' professional, who is accountable, and generically and primarily oriented to performance indicators, competition, comparison and responsiveness, etc. Here cold calculation and extrinsic values predominate. This is the archetypal 'post-modern' professional — defined by depthlessness, flexibility, transparency and represented within spectacle — within performances. Like the performative institution the 'post-professional' is conceived of as simply responsive to external requirements and specified targets, armed with formulaic methods suited to every eventuality – a 'specialist without spirit' in Weber's words. Their 'professionalism' inheres in the willingness and ability to adapt to the necessities and vicissitudes of policy. This is a professional who is essentially inessential and insubstantial; who is 'disembedded' (Weir, 1997) and an 'object of knowledge' (Dillabough, 1999: 387). A professional whose social action is rendered 'adiaphoric' to use Bauman's term. Such social action is 'neither good nor evil, measurable against technical (purpose-oriented or procedural), but not against moral criteria… it renders moral responsibility for the Other ineffective' (Bauman, 1993: 125).

The latter, the subordinate, is a very modernist discourse, an under-stated and under-valued discourse expressed in a very different register, which interpolates what I have called the 'authentic professional' or (perhaps) 're-oriented' professional, who absorbs and learns from but is not fundamentally re-made by reform. Such a professional exists 'in a space of concerns' (Taylor, 1989: 51). The work of the 'authentic teacher' involves 'issues of moral purpose, emotional investment and political awareness, adeptness and acuity' (Hargreaves, 1994: 6). Authenticity is about teaching having an 'emotional heart' (Woods, 1996) or as Hargreaves argues, teaching, in this sense, is about desire, because 'without desire, teaching becomes arid and empty, it loses its meaning' (Hargreaves, 1994: 12). Meaning is founded upon both a personal commitment — motivation — and a shared moral language. According to Charles Taylor 'authenticity… requires (i) openness to horizons of significance… and (ii) a self definition in dialogue' (Taylor, 1991: 66). Here professional practice is 'not solely determined by one's own narrative, but… also shaped by social and structural relations both within and beyond…' (Dillabough, 1999: 387). As Dillabough (p. 393) puts it 'teachers, as authentic individuals, bring into the practice of teaching (history, narrative, subjectivity, positioning)'. Authentic teachers know where they stand in relation to a metaphorical field of open, self-governing discipline but do not necessarily stand still. This field provides a basis of reflection, dialogue and debate, a public space for moral and critical discourse. It does not tell them what to do. It provides them with a language for thinking about what they do and reflecting upon their work and the work of others within a relationship of active subjects. They act within a set of situated dilemmas and messy confusions - to which there are often no satisfactory, simple, singular, solutions. They learn to live with ambivalence. Professionalism here is a matter as acting within uncertainty and learning from the consequences – a 'learning profession' (Nixon, *et al.*, 1997). It is a matter of 'grappling with how to act morally in an uncertain and constantly changing educational context' (Grimmett and Neufeld, 1994: 229). They struggle and compromise, plan and act spontaneously, and improvise within and across contradictory roles and expectations, creativity and imagination are important; 'the teacher herself is a resource in managing the problems of educational practice' (Lampert, 1985: 194)[11] – this is a mix of artistry and intuition (Humphreys and Hyland, 2002: 9). Clearly, such language and imagery grate against both the rational, calculability of reform and the fake, celebratory performances of excellence and quality[12]. All of this may be something like what Nixon, *et al.* (1997: 25) call 'emergent professionalism' which 'can be defined around the values and practices of "agreement" and "agreement-making"'.

'Authentic' and 'reformed' classrooms may well be very different places to be,

for the learner as much as for the teacher[13]. I also want to be very clear here that the 'authentic' teacher is not simply the teacher as she was prior to reform. I am not simply trying to conjure up an 'imaginary antecedent'; although some of the teachers quoted refer back to 'better times' and clearly the critique of teachers which underpins 'post-professionalism' often trades heavily, certainly in the UK, upon a revisionist history of teaching which eradicates 'counter-memories' (Barber and Sebba 1999 is a stunning example of such revisionism). Nonetheless, my point is that authenticity is a different discourse of professionalism, not simply an old one.

NOTES

1 This paper represents a further elaboration of ideas sketched out in Ball, S.J. (2000) and Ball, S.J. (2001)

2 I shall leave it for the moment to others to offer of more optimistic account of possibilities for reconstruction in this new world (Gold, *et al.*, 2003; Moore, *et al.*, 2002; Stronach, 2002). I want to take the position here that narratives of hope, and the ontology of 'not yet' (Jonas, 1984), of possibilities, are distractions from the immediacy, the 'real' of wretchedness and torment.

3 I have to own up to my own ambivalences here – about professionalism. Professionals are both heroes and villains within modern sociology.

4 Thus, I do not use authenticity here in quite the sense that Taylor (1981: 77) does – as 'a more self-responsible form of life' – but I do not exclude this. Authenticity for me is the possibility and the validity of a relationship of reflection between the self and the collectivities of the social world. And this would certainly incorporate Taylor's view of 'self-centred practices as the site of ineradicable tension' which comes from 'the sense of an ideal that is not being fully met in reality' (p. 76), and as he goes on to say ' this tension can turn into a struggle' (p. 77), and as in my definition of professionalism, this 'will be bad news for anyone who hoped for a definitive solution' (p. 77).

5 As part of what Foucault (1970: 342) calls 'man's disappearance'.

6 Rather than 'for' or 'in' education.

7 While as Menter, *et al.* (2004: 198) point out 'the McCrone approach is characterised by concerns about professional development' in contrast to the English Threshold Assessment's 'heavy emphasis on "performance management", I wonder to what extent in practice 'professional development' is separated off from the 'pressures' (Macdonald, p. 424) of a classroom performance regime.

8 Subjectivity is "patterns by which experiential and emotional contexts, feelings, images and memories are organised to form one's self image, one's sense of self and others, and our possibilities of existence. (De Lauretis, 1986: 5)

9 Although as various commentators have pointed out, it is not impossible to conceive of a system of benign or progressive metrics, related to reducing social inequalities for example. The question is whether the form and substance of performativity can be separated out. I have my doubts.

10 And as I have suggested in practice, some teachers as social subjects live both discourses and struggle to cope with their discordance.

11 As with schools, teachers will also be positioned differently to resist the pressures of reform, or 'retain' an 'authentic' perspective.

12 The issue of language, and more generally of discourse, has probably never been more important in the field of education. Teacher educators and teachers themselves need to be very very aware of the vocabularies in use when accounting for the act of teaching.

13 This perhaps begs the question as to whether we might find 'authentic' teachers in 'reformed' classrooms.

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